

Leicester,
Frid. Evng.
Feb. 8/78.

23

My dear good friend Garrison;

I am remiss in not having sooner thanked you for copy of the paper containing yr letter to Mr Leander. Let me do so now, and also for the Traveller, rec^d from you this evening, having the choice extracts wh. are so exact a counterpart of what ~~you~~ used to read, first page & first column (or more) of The Liberator, under the heading of Refuge of Oppression. The last extract, that from the Petersburg (Va.) papers, I had seen before; the others I had not, nor heard of. Low & scurrilous & contemptible as they are, & impossible to have come from minds knowing what decency means, they are doubtless representative of a large element in the Nation, North & South.

But it is an element not "at the front", so to speak; and, I trust, never to be there again. It is a good effect of your letters & rebukes that, despite of their asseverations to the contrary, they are unmasked; & the people generally mark and understand them.

But I think you are not right / God

grant that you may not be) is attributing to the Southern population generally a spirit of hostility to the Union, or to the colored people among them. If such be the fact, however, it cannot long be hidden by any professions.

Nor can I think it right, or just to Pres. Hayes, to class him with such blot on the human name as the author of the "Securitiy" which you have arranged in the "Traveller". If such men defend him, — (with whatever of sincerity, or of hypocrisy, & it is hard to believe that the Brooklyn Eagle, & others of its kindred, is doing aught but falsely) — so, on the other hand, do very many longheaded, upright, & honorable men defend & justify him, & keep their faith in him. Neither the advocacy of the one, or of the other, proves him ^{wrong} ^{or} right; but if the approval of the bad class is to be counted against him, it cannot be otherwise than right to count the other as for his justification. There are many bad & base men who are resisting the

President, & striving in every possible way to
circumvent him, & bring reproach upon his
designs, - of whom I instance B. F. Butler,
whom I believe to be a thorough demagogue,
and a most unprincipled & dangerous man;
of course the opposition of such a man should
never be named as having any resemblance
to yours.

I must own that the President does seem
to me to be lacking in nerve, force, and
decision, - elements in which I expected he
would excel.

~ It made me very unhappy, as I read
your letter to W. Chandler, to think that I
could not see eye to eye with you, as so long
I have done. I would fain take my
share of all the odium you have to bear
from the unprincipled demagogues of the
land. Of such, we have only one favor to
ask, - that they may never speak well of us.
If the event should prove that you have
judged Mr. Hayes & his Administration correctly,
the prospect for the Nation is dark indeed.

It has however long been obvious that the President's power is greatly shorn. A hostile, or a lukewarm, Congress, will block his wheels in every direction. I hope we are yet to see some evidence that he has a mind of his own, and a spirit to resist their foolish & their evil schemes. Our present Congress, in my judgment, is (taken as a whole) a shame to the land, and their daily doings full of present mischief, and of worse to come. I fear they represent the country only too well.

— My wife has been away for some weeks, but is expected home tomorrow; and my younger daughter is in Connecticut. Only Ade' and I, of the family, at home. We send our love to you, and rejoice that you are spared to be a "touchstone on the walls", and are strong to speak for those whom you believe to be betrayed.

Do you know what W. Whittier thinks of Pres. Hayes?

Affectionately, Yours
Saml May